175 Baangoni had to give up their plan to subjugate the Babembas. They turned towards Tabora. After their victory over the Baangoni, the Babemba on the other hand, carried the war into the territories of their cowardly neighbors, whom they subjugated and ruled with an [997] iron hand. When Mgr. Dupont came to the terrible kingdom of the Babemba for the first time, the tribe had established its rule over a territory which was twice the size of the present Vicarage. The neighboring tribes would tremble at the mere mention of the word [648] Babemba. Even today we can hear songs cursing the cruelty of the Babemba among the tribes of Tanganyika and Broken Hill.

161 The present population of the Babemba is about 100, 000. The wars of the past have decimated them.

181 The most outstanding characteristic of the Babemba is that they are a war-like tribe to the highest degree, dreaming only of pillage, battle, submission of neighboring tribes, imposition of overburdening tributes, expansion and aggrandizement of the kingdom, but all this by means of a civil and military organization which is indeed remark- [52] able. The Babemba are one of the most intelligent races of Africa. [192] They have an exceedingly rich language including more than 20, 000 [538] words; they have a literature of their own consisting of martial poetry, songs of all kinds, more than 1500 proverbs, several hundred riddles, about a thousand axioms, etc.; a treasure bequeathed by their ancestors

157 In mining centers the Babembas are known for their keenness [zeal], their polite manners, their respect for authority, and their spirit of initiative.

484 My picture would not be complete if I did not mention the fact that the Babemba of today are perhaps the greatest adventurers of Central Africa. You meet Babemba everywhere. There are Babemba in Zanzibar, Panda, Lindi, Bulawayo, in Broken Hill, the Belgian Congo, in Transvaal and on the Cape. The Mubemba does not find it difficult to move; he can take care of himself, and he is at home everywhere.

584 ENGAGEMENT [Kukobeka]: Engagement takes place at an early age, around ten or twelve years, when the young betrothed are not yet nubile [imabele tayalakula]. [21]

Consent: An emissary [Shibukombe], who does not belong to the clan of those who wish to become engaged, is chosen. He is a man who enjoys a certain amount of prestige in the village and can speak out

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not only necessary, but it is the only constituent of his diet which actually ranks as food. All other foodstuffs, whatever their nutritive value, he considers merely as additions to the essential *ubwali*, as snacks to be eaten before the main meal is prepared, or as substitute foods during the hunger months. In fact, there are very few types of food which he eats without porridge, except the various gourds and pumpkins on which he is forced to live when his grain is exhausted, or sweet potatoes—a fairly recent introduction—maize, honey, and fruits of the bush. All these may be eaten freely, but are simply not considered to make a meal. I have watched natives eating the roasted grain off four or five maize cobs under my very eyes, only to hear them shouting to their fellows later, 'Alas, we are dying of hunger. We have not had a bite to eat all day'. This attitude is in complete contrast to that of most of the Southern Bantu, who live almost entirely on maize.[1]

The importance of millet porridge in native eyes is constantly reflected in traditional utterance and ritual. In proverb and folk-tale the word *ubwali* stands for food itself. When discussing his kinship obligations, a native will say, 'How can a man refuse to help his mother's brother who has given him *ubwali* all these years?' or, 'Is he not her son? How should she refuse to make him *ubwali*?' In fact, he uses the word as we do 'bread' in such phrases as 'daily bread' or 'working for our bread and butter', but more constantly, and really with better reason.

In Bemba ceremonial *ubwali* stands for food and indirectly for ordinary daily intercourse. Millet flour, meat, and salt represent the essential foodstuffs in the girl's initiation rite (*icisungu*), and at the founding of a chief's village, when small portions of each are buried beneath the walls of the Sacred Kitchen of the tribe.[2] At marriage a ceremonial exchange of dishes of *ubwali* between the relatives of the bridegroom and the bride occurs at one stage of the proceedings. A tiny lump of the porridge, made with special ritual precautions, is used to touch the lips of any individuals coming to an end of a ritual fast, whether during initiation, marriage, inheritance, &c. Further, an individual may himself announce that he is going to abstain from *ubwali* in order to show that he wishes to put himself in a special class apart from the ordinary activities of his fellows. Men or women

[1] Eaten, of course, in larger quantities and prepared as flour—'mealie-meal'.
[2] Cf. p. 48[illegible]

[Erratum, should be p. 148. — Analyst]

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258 laborious and the product bitter to the taste. European salt is much better liked, but it is hard to get except in districts near
436 white stores. In distant parts of the country both European and Mpika salt are used for barter, and the traveller will notice as he gets farther and farther away from civilization that the purchasing power of salt goes up and that of money goes down. The white man's carriers are given salt in part payment for their work so that they may buy their provisions with it, and women prefer it to any other form of payment for small services. I have often
262 found that children would rather be given a little European salt than a sweet, and they eat it neat. At Katenda's village during a period of shortage (March 1933) some children, who had been living for some weeks chiefly on gourds, picked up grains of salt from the floor of my tent with moistened fingers. Their avid faces were striking.

263 The craving for salt is so strong that the word itself (*umucele*) has come to have figurative meanings. In proverbs and folk-tales the
[538] husband goes to fetch salt from distant places, and this represents the fulfilment of his duties as a husband. In the girls' initiation cere-
[981] mony the woman who dresses up as a mock bridegroom at one stage of the ritual, carries an imitation lump of salt over her shoulder, and small pieces are included among the sacred objects (*mbusa*) presented to the girl during the rite. In the ceremonial of
[621] founding a chief's new village, salt, together with flour and meat, are buried in the foundations of the ruler's hut. Nowadays, too, the word *umucele* is sometimes used as a generic term for European
[196] goods as being the most highly valued of these. Two old women who came to live near Kasama because of the shopping facilities there, described their motive as, 'We came to lick a little of the white man's salt'.[1]

262 (*c*) *Meat*. The natives' longing for meat is also almost a craving.
• [192] Meat and fish are considered the *umunani par excellence* and a special word *ubukashya* is used to describe the hunger for meat as distinct from other foods. The supply of game has probably always been inadequate in this area, but the situation is considerably worse to-day. I have noticed that natives returning from the copper field, however sceptical they may be of the other advantages of civilization, are all unanimous that 'It is fine to get so much meat.' In his own country it is no exaggeration to

[1] *Twaisa uko kunyunga tumucele.*

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853 period of suckling, is able to give her child any nourishment at all. Two or three years after the birth of the baby her breasts have begun to hang down like wrinkled leather bags. But natives say that the glands go on secreting as long as the child sucks the breast. 'On the first day nothing comes from the breast but a fluid like water. On the second day, in the evening, the breasts are full (*akasaka*) with a white liquid.' After some months they say the fluid is *insa*, but that the secretion may continue for most of a woman's life. If the mother dies the baby is suckled by its grandmother, either as a form of consolation, or actually in the belief that it is getting food. I know a case of a woman who had suckled seven children of her own, evenly spread at about three years apart, and who then began to nurse the baby of her eldest daughter, who had died in childbirth.

It seems obvious that with a woman of this age, the baby is dependent on comfort and caresses from its grandmother rather than actual nourishment, and this is probably largely the case with the two- or three-year-old child just before it is weaned. I have already described the way in which Bemba babies cling to their mother's breasts if frightened or distressed, or demand to be suckled long after they have been weaned, at moments of illness or misery.[1] In fact I have wondered whether the natives regard the mother's milk as primarily a food at all. On the one hand they recognize that lactation depends upon what the mother eats. I have heard women say on different occasions, 'You can't suckle a child on mushrooms without porridge', 'Her breasts are full as she ate meat last night', 'If she doesn't eat how can she feed the child?', or 'Of course my baby is defecating all day long since I am eating nothing but pumpkins'. On the other hand no woman I questioned would definitely commit herself to the statement that the mother's milk was food. A term for 'milk' does not exist among these agri-
● [192] cultural people. The word *amakaka*, used of cow's milk drunk by Europeans, is borrowed from Nyasaland. One woman described the mother's milk as *amafina*,[2] the general term for any kind of secretion, whether from the nose or ears. Another said, 'It is water. Well, really, it is just the breast', and a third quite definitely, 'It is water only, not food. To suckle is not to appease hunger. You give the child the breast perpetually to quieten him,

[1] *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe*, 1932, p. 44.
[2] Distinguish from *amafi* = faeces. Cf. p. 51.

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since many of them have been given to their husbands before puberty and some form of intercourse, usually incomplete, has taken place. They have also acted as nurses of their young brothers and sisters to an extent that is rare in most sections of our society, and they are therefore familiar with the elements of the rather simple system of child care practised in this tribe.

What then do the Bemba girls learn in their chisungu or in what sense can they be said to learn?

First of all they learn a secret language or rather, secret terms. The different *mbusa* have names supposedly, at any rate, known only to initiated women. For instance I was taken some way into the bush to be told with every precaution to ensure secrecy that 'we women' call whitewash *lota*, an archaic term, instead of *pemba*, the more common word. Girls also learn the chisungu songs. The doggerel rhymes associated with the *mbusa* (see Appendix B) are some of them widely sung, but they have a number of secret or semi-secret meanings apart from the overt one. What seems to the educationist to be the most mumbo-jumbo and useless aspect of the whole affair may actually constitute one of the most prized items of information to the people concerned.

Girls are also said to learn the secret language of marriage. The Bemba language abounds in phraseology with hidden or allusive meaning. It is part and parcel of court etiquette and it is used in other special social relationships and in particular between husband and wife. 'We married people' said a male informant 'know how to say things that a young boy and girl would not understand. That is what we want a girl to learn at her chisungu'. The intimacy that surrounds the physical relation of husband and wife, described as 'the secret things within the house' seems to the European to be curious in view of the lack of other forms of intimate companionship between them, but it is evident that it is the special phraseology and the taboos of married life that a man hopes his wife will learn in the chisungu. The candidates also have to learn the rather complex sequence of the rites themselves which represents a considerable effort of memory in communities without a written language.

Nor does it matter if the girl herself does not see the whole of the ceremony which is performed over her. It is a form of education

614 praise-names are very similar to those shouted
186 in honour of a chief on formal occasions or used
195 as titles of address to him, and these phrases, preserved exactly in traditional form, and often expressed in archaic language, appear to be characteristic of Bantu chieftainship and clan system. Malinowski has shown in a typical Melanesian society how the myths of a clan origin, 'owned' and recounted by its members, form a recognised charter for the exercise of legal privileges such as rights of occupation of land or ritual prerogatives, and it is quite
[773] probable that among Bantu, where myths, in the sense of tales of the miraculous doings of clan heroes are rare, yet the recitation of the names of clan or chiefly ancestors, the repetition of stories of their lives, or the shouting of a key sentence or proverb from such tales may fulfil very similar sociological functions.

614 It is the name of the Bemba *mukoa* and the
[616] story of its acquisition by a special lineage group that provides the basis for the pairing of opposite clans, or *banungwe*. The clan names are those of a variety of objects, animal, plants, meteorological phenomena such as rain, parts of the human body, and even cultural activities such as funeral lamentations. The most common are
● [192] the following:—crocodile (*ngandu** or *ngwena*—the royal clan), fish (*sabi*, or in the Bisa country *tembo*), lion (*nkalamo*), leopard (*ngo**), otter (*mbao*), rat (*mpuku*), frog (*luo*), bees (*kashimu*), elephant (*nsofu*), wild pig (*ngulube* or *Cabala** or *nama*), tortoise (*Nkamba*), goat (*mbushi*), dog (*mbwa*), honey-bird (*nguni*): millet (*besa**), porridge (*bwali*), mushroom (3 clans—*boa*, the ordinary word for mushroom, *mwansa*, a special type of mushroom, and *ngona*, the Bisa mushroom clan), grass (*kani*, diminutive of *cani*), gourd (*lunda*), castor-oil seed (*mono*), wild loquat (*mumba** or *Cilufya*), tree or drum clan (*ngoma* or *muti* in Bisa country), beans (*nkanda**): iron (*mbulo*), rain (*mfula*), anthill (*culu*), male genitals (*membe*), female genitals (*nkushi*), lamentations (*nkonde** or *misoa*), pot (*inongo*). It is interesting to note
614 that some of the names are words no longer in
171 common use, *i.e.*, those marked with an asterisk, and that the majority of these titles are found widely spread among those Rhodesian tribes which claim an origin from the Luba-speaking peoples in the Congo, such as the Kaonde, Bisa, Ushi, Unga, etc. This is especially true of the

[p. 189(A)]